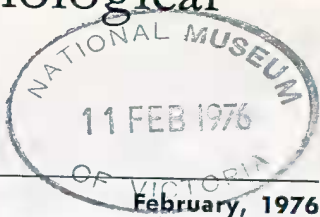


Australian Entomological Magazine

Aust. ent. Mag.



Volume 2, Part 6

February, 1976

BUTTERFLIES OF CENTRAL AUSTRALIA

By John C. Pfitzner and Roger K. Fargher,
Hermannsburg, via Alice Springs, N.T. 5750.

The paper by Peters (1974), listing the butterflies known from central Australia, has stimulated us to prepare a list of our butterfly captures at Hermannsburg, 128 km west of Alice Springs, during 1974 and the first three months of 1975. Our list includes the records of Graham Griffin, who collected in the Palm Valley area, 16 km south of Hermannsburg, from August 1973 to June 1974, and at Alice Springs since June 1974. It also includes the records of Anthony Hoff and Bernard Pohlner who collected at Hermannsburg during 1974.

Together we have collected 30 species, 25 of which are represented in the authors' collection. One specimen of *Taractrocera ina* Waterhouse has been donated to the South Australian Museum and we intend to send at least one specimen of all other species collected by us. The following four species collected by Graham Griffin are in his collection: *Papilio anaectus* (W. S. Macleay), *Danaus plexippus plexippus* (Linnaeus), *Vanessa itea* (Fabricius), and *Jalmenus icilius* Hewitson. *Ogyris amaryllis parsonsi* Angel was collected by Anthony Hoff and is in his possession.

One of the species listed by Peters (1974), *Croitana croites* (Hewitson), was not collected or observed by us. However, we have been able to add here an additional 17 species (those marked by an asterisk *) to the 14 recorded by Peters. Thus, a total of 31 species is now known from central Australia. Common and Waterhouse (1972) do not include central Australia in the distribution of any additional species. Chadwick (1958), a paper apparently overlooked by Peters, reports having observed in Alice Springs in June 1957 *Anapheis java teutonia* (Fabricius), *Papilio demoleus sthenelus* W. S. Macleay, and *Precis villida calybe* (Godart). These three species are, however, listed by Peters in his paper.

Unless otherwise indicated in the following list, all Hermannsburg collections and observations were made by the authors and all Palm Valley collections and observations by Graham Griffin. It should be noted that 1973 and especially 1974 were years of exceptionally high rainfall in central Australia producing excellent growth of food plants. We have followed the classification and nomenclature of Common and Waterhouse (1972) while food plant identifications and nomenclature are based on Chippendale (1971).

List of species

HESPERIIDAE

**Taractrocera ina* Waterhouse. Ina grassdart.

Three specimens were collected at Hermannsburg 24.x.74, 3.i.75 and 9.i.75. One additional specimen was collected by Anthony Hoff at Hermannsburg 26.x.74. Only two other specimens have been observed.

One specimen was collected at Alice Springs by Graham Griffin 8.ii.75.

This species has not previously been taken in central Australia, being recorded only from northern Australia, coastal Queensland, and parts of New South Wales.

**Cephrenes trichopepla* (Lower). Yellow palmdart.

Three specimens were collected at Hermannsburg 8.iv.74, 14.iv.74 and 28.iv.74. No others were observed.

Three specimens were collected at Palm Valley, the first 11.iv.74 and the other two in the same month. A few others were observed at about the same time.

This species has previously been taken only in northern Australia and coastal Queensland.

PAPILIONIDAE

Papilio anactus W. S. Macleay. Dinky swallowtail.

One specimen was collected in Alice Springs by Graham Griffin 3.iv.75.

None were collected or observed at Hermannsburg.

**Papilio aegaeus aegaeus* Donovan. Orchard butterfly.

Five specimens were collected at Hermannsburg 3.ix.74 (♂), 26.ix.74 (♀), 5.x.74 (♀), 9.x.74 (♂) and 12.x.74 (♀). Only very few others were observed during these months.

Three specimens were collected in Alice Springs by Graham Griffin 5.x.74 (2♂) and 3.i.75 (♀). Others were observed in Alice Springs during the last three months of 1974 and the first three months of 1975.

This species has previously been recorded only from eastern Australia.

Papilio demoleus sthenelus W. S. Macleay. Chequered swallowtail.

Three specimens were collected at Hermannsburg April 1974. It was observed in large numbers during the first six months of 1974.

Two specimens were collected about 40 km west of Hermannsburg January 1975. During this month, and also during February and March, when only very few were observed at Hermannsburg itself, large numbers were observed in the area west of Hermannsburg.

Four specimens were collected at Palm Valley August, September and November 1973, and January 1974. During these months and until June 1974 large numbers were observed. Larvae were found by Graham Griffin to be abundant on the Verbine, *Psoralea patens* Lindl.

PIERIDAE

Catopsilia pyranthe crokera (W. S. Macleay). Common migrant.

Four specimens were collected at Hermannsburg March and April 1974, one in December 1974, and five in January 1975. It was observed

in large numbers from February to April 1974 and from December 1974 to March 1975.

Three specimens were collected at Palm Valley in February 1974. It was observed here in large numbers from February to April 1974.

**Catopsilia pomona pomona* (Fabricius). Lemon migrant.

One specimen (♀, pale form) was collected at Hermannsburg 27.iv.74. An additional specimen was collected at Hermannsburg by Anthony Hoff May 1974. No others were observed.

Four specimens of the form *crocale* were collected at Hermannsburg April 1974, one in December 1974, plus one in January and one in February 1975. Many were observed from March to May 1974 and a few also during the first three months of 1975.

Only very few specimens of the form *crocale* were observed at Palm Valley February and March 1974.

This species has previously been recorded only from northern and eastern Australia.

**Catopsilia scylla etesia* (Hewitson). Orange migrant.

One specimen was collected at Hermannsburg 6.iv.74. No others were observed.

One was observed at Palm Valley March 1974.

Common and Waterhouse (1972) indicate that the distribution of this species extends southwards to Alice Springs, but specific localities are not given for central Australia.

Eurema smilax (Donovan). Small grass yellow.

Seven specimens were collected at Hermannsburg March to May 1974, one in November 1974, and five in January 1975. This species was very common throughout 1974 and the first three months of 1975.

Five specimens were collected at Palm Valley August and September 1973 and January 1974. Graham Griffin observed larva feeding on the leaves of *Cassia eremophila* A. Cunn. ex Vogel.

**Elodina padusa* (Hewitson). Narrow-winged pearl white.

Four specimens were collected at Hermannsburg 14.iv.74, 15.iv.74 (two specimens), and 21.iv.74. Very few others were observed at this time.

Three specimens were collected at Palm Valley, 15.i.74, 23.i.74 and 23.ii.74. Only four or five others were observed during January and February 1974.

Graham Griffin observed four or five at Hamilton Downs, north-west of Alice Springs, October 1974.

Almost all specimens were captured or observed at Wild Orange, *Capparis mitchelli* (Lindl. ex. F. Muell.) Benth.

This species has been recorded from large areas of northern and eastern Australia but not previously for central Australia.

Anapheis java teutonia (Fabricius). Caper white.

Six specimens were collected at Hermannsburg March to May 1974, two in December 1974, and three in January 1975. Very large numbers of this species were observed during the whole of 1974 and the first three months of 1975.

Six specimens were collected at Palm Valley August and November 1973 and February 1974. Large numbers were observed during the last two months of 1973 and the first six months of 1974. Graham Griffin observed the use of *Capparis mitchelli* and *Capparis spinosa* L. var. *nummularia* (DC.) F. M. Bail. as food plants.

**Pieris rapae rapae* (Linnaeus). Cabbage white.

Two specimens were collected at Hermannsburg December 1974, seven in January and one in February 1975. Many others were observed during these months and a few also in March 1975.

One specimen was collected in Alice Springs by Graham Griffin 3.i.75. Others were observed in August and September 1974.

Within Australia this species has not previously been recorded beyond the southern and eastern coastal areas.

NYMPHALIDAE

**Danaus plexippus plexippus* (Linnaeus). Wanderer.

Two specimens, both males, were collected at Palm Valley 1.xii.73 and 15.xii.73. Graham Griffin observed one at Serpentine Gorge in the western McDonnell Ranges 25.xii.73 and another one 8 km south of Hermannsburg early February 1974. No other observations were made.

Within Australia this species has previously been recorded only from eastern Australia and south-west Western Australia.

Danaus chrysippus petilia (Stoll). Lesser wanderer.

Three specimens were collected at Hermannsburg May and June 1974, and three in January 1975. Many were observed throughout 1974 and the first three months of 1975.

Three specimens were collected at Palm Valley August, November and December 1973. Many others were observed during the last six months of 1973 and the first six months of 1974.

Euploea core corinna (W. S. Macleay). Common Australia crow or oleander butterfly.

One specimen was collected at Hermannsburg 6.ii.75. Bernard Pohlner collected one other specimen at Hermannsburg 5.xii.74. No others were observed.

**Hypolimnas bolina nerina* (Fabricius). Common eggfly.

Seven specimens were collected at Hermannsburg 6.iv.74 (♂), 7.iv.74 (♀), 13.iv.74 (♂), 15.iv.74 (♂), 25.iv.74 (♀), 12.i.75 (♀) and 1.iii.75 (♀). Only very few others were observed at scattered intervals during 1974 and one other female in March 1975.

Four specimens were collected at Palm Valley 10.xi.73 (♂), 27.i.74 (♀), 22.ii.74 (♂) and 15.iv.74 (♀). About 12 others were observed in late 1973 and early 1974.

This species has previously been known only from northern and eastern Australia.

Vanessa kershawi (McCoy). Painted lady.

Four specimens were collected at Hermannsburg May and June 1974 and one in January 1975. A few were observed from time to time throughout 1974 and the first three months of 1975.

Two specimens were collected at Palm Valley August and December 1973. During these two months they were observed in particularly large numbers. Others were observed at other times between September 1973 and June 1974.

**Vanessa itea* (Fabricius). Australian admiral.

Three specimens were collected at Palm Valley September 1973. Only four or five others were observed.

None were collected or observed at Hermannsburg.

This species has previously been known only from the Atherton Tableland, north Queensland and the southern third of Australia.

Precis villida calybe (Godart). Meadow argus.

Six specimens were collected at Hermannsburg April and May 1974, four in January and one in March 1975. A few others were observed at various times during 1974 and in January and March 1975.

One specimen was collected at Palm Valley April 1974. A few others were observed April to June 1974.

**Acraea andromacha andromacha* (Fabricius). Glasswing.

Three specimens were collected at Hermannsburg April and May 1974. Many others were observed during these months and some were observed also in later months. Only one has been observed during the first three months of 1975 (22.i.75).

Three specimens were collected at Palm Valley in August and October 1973 and in January 1974. Others were observed throughout the last six months of 1973 and the first six months of 1974, but they were especially common February to April 1974. Graham Griffin observed the use of *Hybanthus enneaspermus* (L.) F. Muell. var. *enneaspermus* as a food plant.

Although this is a common species in northern and eastern Australia, including areas of low rainfall, it has not previously been recorded from central Australia.

LYCAENIDAE

**Jalmenus icilius* Hewitson. Icilius blue.

Three specimens (2♂, 1♀) were collected at Palm Valley 23.i.74.

Ogyris amaryllis parsonsi Angel.

Two specimens (1♂, 1♀) were collected at Hermannsburg by Anthony Hoff 25.viii.74. Only very few others were observed in August 1974 and in March 1975.

Nacaduba biocellata biocellata (C. & R. Felder). Double-spotted lineblue.

One specimen was collected at Hermannsburg October 1974, six in January and three in February 1975. A number of others were captured but released after identification in January and February 1975.

Four specimens were collected at Palm Valley January 1974. Many others were observed at this time.

**Theclinesstes onycha onycha* (Hewitson).

Two specimens were collected at Hermannsburg 1.i.75 and 12.i.75.

One specimen was collected at Palm Valley 17.i.74. Very few others were observed.

**Lampides boeticus* (Linnaeus). Pea blue.

Two specimens were collected at Hermannsburg May 1974, one in September, two in November, and four in December 1974, and four in January 1975. Others were observed from time to time throughout 1974, and they were observed to be quite common in December 1974 and the first three months of 1975.

One specimen was collected at Palm Valley January 1974. Quite a few others were observed in May and June 1974 but very few at other times.

This common species, which can be found in all states, has not previously been recorded from the dry central region of Australia.

Neolucia serpentata serpentata (Herrich-Schäffer). Chequered blue.

One specimen was collected at Hermannsburg November 1974, four in December 1974, and five in January, and one in February 1975. Many others were observed in December 1974 and January and February 1975.

Four specimens were collected at Palm Valley January 1974. Very many others were observed during that month.

**Zizula hylax attenuata* (T. P. Lucas). Tiny grass blue.

Two specimens were collected at Hermannsburg May 1974, one in October and one in December 1974, and 10 in January 1975. They were observed to be common in January 1975 but were rarely observed at other times.

A few were observed at Palm Valley.

This species has been previously known only from northern and eastern Australia.

Zizina otis labradus (Godart). Common grass-blue.

Six specimens were collected at Hermannsburg April to June 1974 and two in January 1975. Many others were observed during these same months and also at other times throughout 1974.

Three specimens were collected at Palm Valley January 1974. Many others were observed during that month.

**Zizeeria alsulus alsulus* (Herrich-Schäffer). Black-spotted grass-blue.

One specimen was collected at Hermannsburg 12.x.74.

This species has been previously known only from northern and eastern Australia.

**Candalides heathi heathi* (Cox). Rayed blue.

One specimen was collected at Hermannsburg 1.ii.75.

This species has been previously known only from the east, south-east and south-west areas of Australia and from an area east of Kalgoorlie.

References

- Chadwick, C. E., 1958. A visit to central Australia. *Victorian Nat.* 75(4): 53-68.
 Chippendale, G. M., 1971. Check list of Northern Territory plants. *Proc. Linn. Soc. N.S.W.* 96(4): 207-267.
 Common, I. F. B., and Waterhouse, D. F., 1972. *Butterflies of Australia*. Angus and Robertson, Sydney. 498 pp., illustr.
 Peters, J. V., 1974. New butterfly records from central Australia. *Aust. ent. Mag* 1(6): 77.